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Anderson Carriage Manufacturing Company
Anderson
Madison County
Indiana

Photographs and
Written and Historic data

Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service
Department of Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

Anderson Carriage Manufacturing Company

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Location:	Northwest Corner of 25th and Walton Streets UTM: 16.610170.4438490 Anderson South
Date of Construction:	1900c.
Present Owner:	Philadelphia Quartz
Significance:	The Anderson Carriage Manufac- turing Company, an established manufacturer of buggies and carriages, attempted to enter the auto manufacturing field and failed. Its history is typical of the fiercely competitive market at the turn of the century.
Historian:	

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The Anderson Carriage Manufacturing Company, located at the northwest corner of 25th and Walton Streets in South Anderson, established itself as a manufacturer of buggies and carriages well before its founder, George B. Wheelock, turned his attention to the manufacture of horseless carriages. Wheelock worked as a carriage salesman before he opened his own company, and in time he became a respected and influential member of Anderson's business community. However, when he began the manufacture of automobiles, he entered uncharted territory and a fiercely competitive market. Within two years he lost control of his company, which was placed in receivership.

Wheelock came to Anderson at the age of 18 after spending some time in Union City as a salesman for the Union City Carriage Company. He entered the buggy manufacturing business in 1889 with a force of 40 employees, and produced 900 vehicles the first year. Apparently Wheelock was successful, for by 1908 he was named chairman of the Factory Committee of Anderson's Commercial Club. While chairman of the Factory Committee, Wheelock recommended that the Speed Changing Pulley Company--later the DeTamble Motors Company--be given a cash bonus as an incentive to move its plant from Indianapolis to Anderson.

The Anderson Morning Herald did not note a conflict of interest between Wheelock's recommendation to offer a cash bonus to DeTamble Company to relocate and his plan to use DeTamble engines in his own horseless carriage. Wheelock's firm had been manufacturing auto bodies for the Buckeye Manufacturing Company since 1905. Presumably the business community and the local newspaper looked on Wheelock's recommendation as a positive step toward the expansion and consolidation of automobile manufacturing in Anderson.¹

In the fall of 1908, Wheelock's Anderson Carriage Manufacturing Company began the production of finished automobiles. Wheelock's plan was to use what was essentially a carriage body mounted on a large axle to accept soft, cushioned tires. The engine presumably was a two cylinder, twelve horsepower DeTamble motor. The first year, Anderson Carriage Manufacturing Company made two styles for rural districts that sold for \$500 and \$550, and one for city use that sold for \$650.

Throughout the winter of 1908 and into April 1910, business was generally favorable. The company, which had been employing approximately 125 people, announced in April 1909 that it planned to add a night shift as soon as the power company installed a transformer for electric lighting. On 11 December 1909, business prospects appeared so favorable that the Board of Directors voted to increase capitalization of the company from \$100,000 to \$200,000 to keep up with demand for their product. Shortly after recapitalization, the company moved to its quarters at 25th and Walton Streets.

Anderson Carriage Manufacturing Company: The Buildings

The most distinctive feature of the Anderson Carriage Company's factory was its two-story arrangement. The factory, which probably consisted of two buildings situated parallel to each other, was completed late in 1909. While a two-story automobile factory was not unique before the advent of assembly line production, it was unusual in Anderson. Presumably inexpensive land and low construction costs in Anderson influenced the town's other auto manufacturers to build single-story brick factories. Unlike the other auto manufacturers in Anderson, the Anderson Carriage Company chose to build a two-story brick structure. They considered their design progressive.²

Fire partially destroyed the buildings in 1935, although a sprinkler system had been installed in the original factory.

Anderson Carriage Manufacturing Company

NOTES

- 1 Anderson Morning Herald, 29 May 1908, p. 4, and 7 June 1908, pp. 1 and 2.
- 2 Anderson Morning Herald, 11 December 1909.
"Only recently the company moved into two new buildings of the latest factory ideas of construction...one 50 x 115 and two stories..."

Anderson Carriage Manufacturing Company

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following newspapers contain accounts of the Anderson Carriage Manufacturing Company:

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| <u>Anderson Daily Bulletin</u> | 12 March 1966 p. 4
13 May 1964 p.4 |
| <u>Anderson Morning Herald</u> | 1 April 1905 p. 1
29 May 1908 p. 4
7 June 1908 p. 1
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3 December 1908 p. 1
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